



# THE LIBERTY "76" BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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No. 45.

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 8, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE LIBERTY BOYS WORRIED!

OR, THE DISAPPEARANCE OF DICK SLATER.

BY HARRY MOORE.



"I fear Dick has fallen over the bluff!" said Mark Morrison. "I don't think that, for here are his coat, hat and gun," replied Bob; "but it is a mysterious affair!"



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## CHAPTER I.

### THE YOUTH AND THE REDCOATS.

It was the 12th of April, 1780.

At a point about ten miles north from Charleston, South Carolina, a horseman was riding along the road at a gallop.

The horseman was a handsome youth of perhaps twenty years.

He had clear-cut features, keen, gray eyes, a square chin and a well-balanced head covered with long, glossy hair.

While the youth's face was handsome, his dress was nondescript.

He wore a checked cotton shirt, a worn suit of blue homespun, and an old, slouch hat with part of the brim torn off. On his feet was a pair of coarse shoes, run over at the sides, and full of holes. The coat was too small, the sleeves coming nearly halfway to the elbow, and the pants came scarcely more than to the ankles.

The horse which the youth bestrode was a rawboned animal, with a shaggy coat of hair, and looked like a farm horse. The bridle was a heavy one, such as are used for farm horses, and the saddle could scarcely be called one, though it was not uncomfortable to sit in.

This youth, who, at first glance, looked like a farmer's boy of the region and time, was not what he seemed to be, and every one who has read the stories of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will recognize in this lone rider the hero of a thousand wonderful adventures—brave, daring Dick Slater, the captain of the company of youths known as "The Liberty Boys of '76," and the noted scout and spy."

It was, indeed, Dick, and we find him away down in South Carolina, bound for Charleston on a dangerous expedition.

In the city of Charleston was an army of three thousand patriot soldiers.

The commanding officer was General Lincoln.

He was a brave officer, but did not possess the peculiar qualifications which go to make up a great general.

He had remained quietly in Charleston for two months,

while General Clinton, with an overwhelming force of the British, was advancing upon the city.

It was evident that when Clinton succeeded in encompassing Charleston, the little force of patriots would be forced, ultimately, to surrender; and it would have been the proper thing for General Lincoln to evacuate the city at once.

But he did not do so.

Instead, he kept drawing into the city all the force possible, and also stocked up with all the stores in the way of provisions and munitions which he could get hold of.

General Washington, the commander-in-chief of the patriot army, hearing of this, called Dick Slater to him and told him to get ready to carry a message to Lincoln.

Dick had asked permission for his company of "Liberty Boys" to go South with him, and Washington had granted the request, only stipulating that the youth should make all haste, alone, and let the company of youths follow at such speed as was adapted to them.

Dick was cognizant of the need for haste, and said that the fact that the youths were to go would not detain him or delay him an instant, as he would go on ahead at his best speed, and they could follow.

So this was how it happens that we find Dick riding along the South Carolina highway on this April afternoon, alone.

Presently Dick came to a log house standing beside the road.

There was a great deal of timber down in this part of the country and the majority of the houses were log.

Dick rode up to the door and dismounted.

He left his horse standing unhitched, and advancing to the door, knocked upon the frame, the door itself standing partly open.

"Hello, thar; come in!" cried a rough voice.

Dick pushed the door open and stepped across the threshold.

When he had done this, he wished that he hadn't. The reason was simple.

Seated at a table at one side of the large, main room of



the cabin were four British soldiers, one of whom was an officer—a captain.

At the end of the room a man and a woman were seated.

They were roughly dressed, and were evidently the owners of the cabin.

They were typical South Carolinians, and both were smoking.

It was the man who had called out to Dick to "Come in."

The British soldiers were eating, late in the day though it was.

They looked at Dick with considerable interest.

Dick eyed them closely, without appearing to do so.

He wished to get an idea regarding how the redcoats would treat him, as quickly as possible, and if it was to be necessary for him to flee, he would do it without delay.

He could not detect anything save curiosity in the looks of the redcoats, however, and decided that it would be the best policy to take things easy and not arouse suspicion by trying to get away too peremptorily.

The man of the house, who was a rough-looking, shaggy-headed, bearded man, took the pipe from his mouth long enough to ask:

"Who air yo', an' whut d'yo' want?"

"My name's Dick Tompkins," replied Dick, promptly; "an' I'm a-lookin' fur my brother Bill. Hev enny uv ye seen 'im aroun' in these heer parts?"

The man shook his head.

"Don' think we hev," he said; "whut kind of a lookin' feller wuz yer brother Bill?"

"He looked jes' like me," replied Dick, thus boldly drawing attention upon himself.

"Looked jes' like yo'?"

The man spoke slowly and in a wondering tone.

"Yas—jes' like me. We air twins, yo' know."

"Oh, thet's et, hey?"

"Yas."

The man eyed Dick closely, as did the British soldiers also.

"I don' b'leeve I hev ever seen yo' afore," the man said; "yo' don' live in these parts, do yo'?"

Dick shook his head.

"No; we liv' erbout twenty miles frum heer—over on ther Edisto River."

"Oh, thet's et?"

"Yas."

"How long hez yer brother Bill be'n gone?"

"Three days."

"Three days, hey?"

"Yas."

"Whut d'ye think hez becum uv 'im?"

"Dad thinks ez how he hez gone ter jine ther British army."

The redcoats exchanged glances.

The man and woman of the house seemed to be interested, also.

"Then yer folks is loyal ter ther king, air they?" the man asked.

Dick nodded.

"Oh, yas," Dick replied; "they're loyal, but dad, he didn't want Bill ter jine ther army."

"He didn't?"

"No."

"W'y not?"

"Waal, yo' see, dad hez lots uv work fur us boys, an' he didn't want Bill ter jine on thet account."

The man nodded and grinned, and the redcoats smiled.

The supposed country youth's frankness amused them.

"An' yo' air lookin' fur Bill, hey?" the man asked.

"Yas; yo' air shore yo' hain't seen 'im?"

"I'm shore uv et."

"No, he hain't be'n erlong this way," said the woman, in a shrill, cracked voice.

"He is not in the British army, either, young man, I can tell you that much," said the British captain, speaking for the first time.

Dick turned his eyes toward the captain.

"Yo' say Bill hain't in ther British army?" he remarked.

"I am confident he is not."

Dick looked at the officer for a few moments in silence.

He seemed to be pondering.

Then he shook his head.

"I kain't unnerstan' et," he said.

"Can't understand what?" the officer asked.

"W'y, I kain't unnerstan' et, ef Bill hain't jined ther army. Ef he hain't thar, whur is he?"

The captain laughed.

"You can't prove it by me," he said; "one thing is certain, if your brother looks like you, and he had been seen in the British lines, it would have been known all along the line."

The three common soldiers laughed at this remark, and the officer chuckled.

It was evident that he thought he had said something smart.

He little knew that while he was imagining that he was amusing himself and his companions at the expense of an ignorant country bumpkin, that supposed bumpkin was laughing in his sleeve at the officer and his comrades.

Dick acted his part, and did not seem to understand that the officer had made sport of him.



"Waal, Bill looks exactly like me," he said, "an' ef yo' see ennybuddy ez looks like me, et will be him."

"We'll remember, and if we see your brother we will tell him he had better go home and get to work for his dad," the officer said.

One of the soldiers leaned over and whispered in the captain's ear for a few moments, and the officer nodded and smiled.

Dick saw this, and, fearing that it presaged trouble, made up his mind to go at once.

He did not think it would occasion suspicion now, as he had been in the house fifteen or twenty minutes, and had finished the errand which had brought him—at least so it would appear to the inmates of the cabin.

In reality, Dick had stopped for the purpose of inquiring how far it was to Charleston.

The thought struck him that he might ask the question now, without occasioning suspicion, and he said:

"Kin enny uv ye tell me how fur et is ter Charleston?"

"Why do you wish to know?" asked the captain.

He frowned and looked at Dick with a severe air.

"Waal, I think ez how't Bill is headed fur Charleston, mister," said Dick, "an' I'm ergoin' ter foller an ketch 'im, ef I kin."

"Oh, you are?"

"Yas; thet's whut dad tole me ter do."

"And you are going to obey orders, eh?"

"Yas, mister."

The officer laughed.

"You would make a good soldier," he said; "to obey orders is the first and greatest lesson which a soldier has to learn, and you seem to have already learned it."

"Then Bill wouldn't make ez good er soljer ez me," said Dick; "fur he didn't obey orders. Dad tole 'im ter do sum work, an' 'stid uv doin' uv et, Bill, he sloped."

"He ran away, did he?"

"Yas."

"And you think he has gone to Charleston to join the army?"

"Yas."

"Then he isn't a loyal king's man, for the army in Charleston is rebel, and not British."

"I meen thet he hez gone toward Charleston," said Dick; "ez I unnerstan' et, ther British army is surroundin' Charleston—hain't thet right?"

Dick was cunningly trying to secure some information from the redcoats.

The officer nodded.

"That is the case," he replied; "but," with a frown, "I would like to know who told you that such was the case."

"W'y, ever'buddy I hev seen in this part uv ther kentry seems ter know et, mister."

"Oh, they do?"

"Yas."

The officer eyed Dick, sternly, and shook his head.

Then he turned his eyes upon his comrades.

"Look at that fellow," he said, indicating Dick.

The three turned their eyes upon the youth.

"Look at him closely!" ordered the captain, in a stern tone.

The men eyed Dick, searchingly.

The youth bore it unflinchingly, however.

He had undergone such tests many times, and was enabled to stand the searching gaze of the four without showing the least sign of trepidation.

"What do you think of him?" the officer asked presently.

"I hardly know, captain," replied one.

"Nor I, captain," from another.

"I am puzzled," the third declared.

"Well, I'm not puzzled," declared the captain; "I wasn't fooled at all. I sized this young fellow up just right, the instant I laid eyes on him, but I thought I would give him rope, and see what he would say and do."

"Whut d'yo' meen?" asked Dick.

He thought he had an understanding of the situation, but he would not let on.

"What do I mean?" repeated the captain. "Why, I mean that you are a rebel spy, and that I have known it all the time!"

## CHAPTER II.

### A SHREWD TRICK.

"Whut, me?" exclaimed Dick.

"Yes, you!"

The officer spoke sharply.

"Me er rebel spy?"

"That is just what you are! Hadn't you suspected it, boys?" to his comrades.

They nodded.

"I had," from one.

"And I," from another.

"I thought there was something wrong somewhere," from the other.

The man and woman took the pipes out of their mouths and stared from the redcoats to Dick in open-mouthed amazement.



"Say, d'yo' reelly think he is er rebel spy, cap'n?" the man asked.

"Of course he is," was the reply. "Why, I knew it from the very first."

Dick Slater was an unusually shrewd youth.

Had this not been the case he would undoubtedly have bolted out of doors when accused of being a rebel spy, and thus confirmed the officer's statement, and run the risk of being shot or captured.

But being unusually shrewd, he did nothing of the kind.

He held his ground.

He stared at the four redcoats in what was a splendid imitation of amazement.

As he was not amazed, this required considerable histrionic ability on the youth's part.

But he was a good actor, and was enabled to play his part perfectly.

Dick had kept a sharp watch on the redcoats, and no move made by either of the four had escaped his notice.

He had observed the whisperings between the captain and one of the redcoats, and had been ready for some such denouement as had come.

He was a splendid reader of faces, and he judged by the expression on the captain's face, and by the peculiar inflection of his voice that he did not really believe that Dick was a spy.

Then why had he accused the youth of being a spy?

This was the question which Dick asked himself, and he fancied he could answer the question.

The redcoats had made up their mind to have some sport at his expense.

They undoubtedly sized him up as being the green country bumpkin which he seemed to be.

Having nothing else on hand just at the time, they had decided to enliven things by enjoying themselves at the youth's expense.

This was the way Dick sized the situation up, at any rate, and he would have been willing to wager that he was not very far out of the way.

And Dick had sized up the affair just right.

The redcoats had no suspicion that Dick was other than he professed to be.

They thought him an ignorant country youth of the locality.

As such, he was legitimate game for them, so they figured it.

Had they been told that the youth was the keenest, most daring, most dangerous scout and spy in the patriot army, they would not have believed it.

They would have laughed at such a statement.

But when Dick denied that he was a spy, they pretended not to believe him.

"Denial will avail you nothing," declared the captain.

"You are a rebel spy, and as such it will be our duty to take you into camp as a prisoner, and turn you over to General Clinton."

"But I tell yo' I hain't no spy!" declared Dick, pretending to be frightened.

The fact was that he was rather glad that the redcoats had taken a notion to try to play this trick on him.

If they would carry it clear through, and take him into the British lines, and then tell him that they were only in sport, and set him free, he would be all right, as then he could wait till night and steal away and reach Charleston.

But the redcoats had no intention of bothering to take Dick into the British lines.

Their idea was to have some sport with him where they were, and then let him go free.

"You are a spy!" roared the captain, pretending to be angry at being disputed; "you are a spy, and such will soon be proven to be the case. Search him, men!"

Now, this was something which Dick had not bargained for.

He felt sure the redcoats were only fooling, and had not expected that they would go so far as to search him.

It would not do to permit that.

He had important messages to General Lincoln, from the commander-in-chief, on his person, and if they were found—and they would be if the redcoats searched him—the fat would all be in the fire.

So when the three redcoats leaped to their feet and advanced toward him, to obey the instructions of the captain, and search Dick, the youth backed toward the door.

He waved the redcoats back.

"Hol' on!" he cried; "don' yo' do et! Don' yo' try fur ter s'arch me! I hain't no spy, an' I hain't got nothin' onter me ez is worth ennythin', but I'm innercent, an' I don' inten' ter 'low ennybody ter take enny liberties with me, so I don't! Jes' yo' fellers keep back!"

"Seize him!" roared the captain. "Seize the spy!"

The men made a leap forward, but they were not quick enough, for Dick had backed till he was near the door, and he made a sudden spring, and went out of doors before the redcoats could get hold of him.

"After him!" yelled the British captain; "don't let him get away! Shoot the spy, if he doesn't stop!"

The three soldiers leaped out through the open doorway, in pursuit of Dick.



They were surprised to see the youth flying down the road on the back of a horse.

They would not have believed that such quick work would have been possible.

They drew their pistols, and fired three shots.

They did not try to hit the fugitive, as they had no idea that he was really a spy.

The entire scheme had been to simply have some sport at the youth's expense, and although it had not panned out just as they had expected that it would, they had no reason to complain.

They thought that they had given the country bumpkin a terrible scare, and were greatly delighted.

The captain came running out of the cabin just as the three fired, and all four laughed heartily.

"Isn't he going, though!" cried one.

"He certainly is!" from another.

"He is the worst frightened youth I ever saw!" from the third.

"I guess he thought he was doomed if he let you get hold of him!" laughed the captain.

The old man and woman of the house had followed the soldiers out.

The man shook his head.

"D'yo' know, I kinder think thet thar youngster wuz smarter than he let on ter be?" he remarked.

The redcoats looked incredulous.

"Bosh!" the captain said; "he was just what he looked to be—a bumpkin. We wanted to give him a scare, and we did it."

"We did, for a fact!"

"That's right!"

"Yes; if ever there was a scared youth, he was the one!"

The man looked doubtful.

"I wuz watchin' thet young feller while yo' wuz a-talkin' ter 'im," he said; "I didn't hev ennythin' else ter do, an' somehow, I thort yo' hed et right w'en yo' 'cused 'im uv bein' er rebel spy."

The captain shook his head.

"Oh, no," he said impatiently. "He is no rebel spy. He doesn't know enough to be anything of the kind. He was just what he professed to be, but we wanted to have some fun with him, and we did have."

"You're right, we did!" agreed one of the soldiers, and then the four laughed again.

They re-entered the cabin, and went ahead with their interrupted meal, talking and laughing the while.

They were sure that they had been very smart, and that they had had a lot of sport at the expense of a coun-

try bumpkin, but the man of the house, who listened to the conversation of the four, shook his head dubiously.

Somehow he had got the idea into his head that Dick was a shrewd youth, and his opinion was that the redcoats had been fooled.

But he realized that it would be useless to try to make the redcoats think as he did, so said no more.

He had had a good deal to do with the redcoats during the past two months, while they had been in the vicinity, getting ready to lay siege to Charleston, and he had learned that they were as a rule obstinate and conceited.

The captain and the three soldiers could not get done talking and laughing over the manner in which they had frightened the youth away, and one got some food down his windpipe, and came near choking.

Meantime, Dick had ridden onward.

The bullets had flown high above his head, and he was shrewd enough to understand that the redcoats had purposely fired high.

"If they had known who I am, they would not have done so, though," the youth thought, and then he laughed aloud.

"The fools!" he murmured; "they are no doubt laughing now, and congratulating themselves on their supposed success in frightening me. Well, let them laugh. I know that I have the best right to laugh, and I will exercise it."

Then Dick laughed aloud once more.

He kept a lookout behind him for a few minutes, and seeing that he was not to be followed, he brought his horse to a walk.

"There is no need of rushing matters," he thought; "I am getting near to the British lines, I judge, and will have to be careful."

Dick rode slowly onward for a few minutes.

He was thinking deeply.

He knew that he had a dangerous task ahead of him. In order to reach General Lincoln, in Charleston, he would have to get through the British lines.

This was something which would be difficult of accomplishment.

Dick knew this, and was trying to think of some plan that would be likely to succeed, and with as little chance of danger as possible.

Not that he was afraid, so far as he himself was concerned, but he knew that if there was danger to himself, there was also danger that the message which he was taking to General Lincoln would not be delivered.

Suddenly a thought came to Dick. Why might he not impersonate the fictitious "Brother Bill," of whom he had



told the redcoats back at the cabin, and then lie in wait for the redcoats, tell them that he wished to join the British army, and then ride into the British lines in their company and in perfect safety.

"I believe it will work," Dick thought. "I have an idea the redcoats will pass along this road, and all I will have to do will be to wait for them.

"There is one danger, though," he added, thoughtfully; "as I told them that 'brother Bill' looked exactly like me, they will be deceived in so far as that is concerned, but they might recognize my horse."

The youth thought the matter over in all its aspects.

"I don't know that they would recognize the horse, after all," he decided at last; "they did not see me when I rode up, and I was some distance away when they ran out of the house back there, and the chances are that they did not take particular notice of the horse.

"It is reasonable to suppose that they did not, and I believe I shall be perfectly safe in working this trick on them."

Having so decided, Dick made up his mind to make the attempt.

If the plan succeeded, he would be enabled to get within the lines of the British without having had to pass the sentinels and pickets, which is very dangerous work, at the best.

The youth rode slowly onward till he came to a point where the road made a bend.

The road ran through heavy timber, and had for several miles, and as soon as he had rounded the bend Dick dismounted, and led his horse into the timber, and tied him to a tree.

"I will keep watch back up the road," thought Dick, "and when I see the redcoats coming I will mount and ride slowly onward and let them overtake me."

The youth put his plan into execution, and had been there about an hour and a half, when he saw four horsemen approaching from the direction in which he had come.

He could make out that the horsemen wore red coats, and did not doubt that they were the men he was waiting for.

"It is they, without a doubt," he said to himself; "well, I will mount and ride onward slowly and let them overhaul me."

Dick untied his horse, led him out into the road, mounted, and rode slowly onward toward the south.

He had not gone more than half a mile, when the redcoats, who had increased the speed of their horses as soon

as they rounded the bend and caught sight of the single horseman in front, overtook him.

They divided and rode alongside Dick, two on each side, and the youth saw they were his late friends of the cabin.

"Hallo!" cried the captain; "it seems to me that you are rather bold to ride along so slowly, after your experience back yonder!"

Dick turned his face toward the officer, and simulated surprise in a very successful manner.

"I dunno whut you mean, mister," he said; "say, kin yo' tell whar ther British army is? My name is Bill Tompkins, and I wanter jine ther army an' fight far King George!"

### CHAPTER III.

#### WITHIN THE BRITISH LINES.

Exclamations escaped the lips of the four redcoats.

"Great Gulliver!"

"Did you hear that!"

"He says his name is Bill!"

"See here," said the captain, severely, "do you mean to say that you are not the fellow whom we encountered back yonder at the cabin a little while ago?"

Dick stared at the man in assumed amazement.

Then a puzzled look took its place.

He shook his head slowly.

"I dunno whut yo' meen," he said.

"Do you mean to say that your name is Bill?" the captain asked.

Dick nodded.

"Yas, Bill—Bill Tompkins."

"Have you a brother?"

Dick pretended to be startled, and looked at the officer quickly.

"Yas, I hev er brother," he replied, slowly.

"What is his name?"

"Dick."

"Dick Tompkins, eh?"

"Yas."

"Humph! Where do you live?"

"Waal, I did live over ter ther west'ard 'bout twenty miles—over on ther Edisto River."

"Ah! And when did you leave there?"

"A couple uv days ergo."

"Why did you leave?"



Dick pretended to hesitate.

Then he seemed to suddenly make up his mind to make a clean breast of it.

"I run erway frum home!" he said.

"Oh, you ran away, did you?"

"Yas."

"Why did you do that?"

"Waal, yo' see, mister, I wanted ter jine ther British army."

"Oh, you did?"

"Yas."

"Why did you wish to join the army?"

"Waal, I wanted ter fight fur King George."

"Oh, you did?"

"Yas, mister."

"Any other reason?"

"Waal, dad, he makes us boys work moughty hard, an' I jes' thort ez how ef I c'u'd git erway an' jine ther army I wouldn't hev ter work so hard no more."

"Oh, that is what you thought, eh?"

"Yas."

"Humph! Well, you won't find it the easiest work in the world to fight for King George. Being in the army is not the easiest thing you ever did; there is lots of hard work about it, and you are exposed to all kinds of weather, and are likely to get shot at any time."

This description did not, of course, affect Dick.

He simply said:

"I'm willin' ter resk et, mister."

"You are, eh?"

"Yas."

"You had better give the matter considerable thought. After you have joined the army there will be no backing out."

"I know thet, mister."

"If you were to run away from the army, you would be followed, captured, taken back to camp and shot!"

Dick simulated a startled look, and then, after a moment, said:

"But I hain't goin' ter run erway, mister."

"You are going to stick, once you have joined, eh?"

"Yas."

"Well, you will have to do so."

"Say, yo' fellers air soljers, hain't yo'?" Dick asked.

The captain nodded.

"Yes, we are soldiers," he replied.

An eager look appeared on Dick's face.

"An' air yo' goin' ter ther British army?" he inquired.

Again the captain nodded.

"That is where we are headed for," was the reply.

"Say, kin I go 'long with yo'?" Dick asked, excitedly.

"Yes," was the reply; "you may go along with us."

"Goody!" cried Dick.

He was a splendid actor.

He acted the part of a country youth, one who had been reared in the woods and among the mountains of the wilderness, to the life.

The soldiers winked at one another.

They were figuring on getting a deal of sport out of the youth.

"Did you know that your brother is hunting you?" asked the captain, as they rode onward.

"No; is thet so?" remarked Dick.

"Yes; we encountered him back a few miles, at the house of a friend. He said he was looking for his twin brother, Bill, and as he went away before we did, when we saw you, we thought you were he. You must look very much alike."

"Oh, we're ez like ez two peas, mister."

"You certainly are."

"But we're diffrent in some things."

"Yes?"

"Yas; yo' see, I wanted ter leave home an' jine ther British army, but Dick, he didn't."

"I see."

"Yas; but somehow dad he allus seemed ter like Dick ther bes', an' giv' 'im ther eazyest work ter do, an' I didn't like thet, nohow."

"I should think you wouldn't like that."

"No, sir; I didn't like et, an' thet's one reezon w'y I wanted ter leeve home an' jine ther army. They treetes ever'body erlike thar, don't they?"

"Yes, everybody is treated the same, in the ranks, my boy."

"Thet suits me, an' I'm glad I run ercross ye' fellers!"

The five rode onward at a fair gait, and half an hour later they entered the lines of the British.

Of course, Dick, being with the British soldiers, was not challenged.

"This is a stroke of luck," he thought; "now, if everything works right, I shall be able to slip away and make my way to Charleston to-night and deliver the message to General Lincoln."

As soon as they had dismounted, the captain turned to Dick.

"Come," he said, "I will show you to the tent of the recruiting officer, and you can enroll your name at once."

"Thank yo', mister!" said Dick.

They were soon at the tent, and the recruiting officer



took Dick's name and then assigned him to the company under the captain who had shown him to the place.

"There; now you are a soldier of the king, Bill, my boy," the captain said; "and you have been assigned to my company."

"Goody! I'm glad uv thet," said Dick; "I know yo', an' won't hev ter git erquainted with sumbuddy else."

The captain smiled.

"Come along, and I will show you the quarters occupied by my company," he said.

Dick accompanied the captain, and they soon reached that part of the encampment where the company was located.

The three soldiers who had been with the captain were there, and were talking with their comrades, and all were laughing.

Dick thought he understood the affair.

The three were telling their comrades about Dick and his mythical brother.

The manner in which the soldiers looked at Dick as he approached, was proof of this.

"That's all right, laugh if you like," thought Dick; "He laughs best who laughs last, they say, and I think I shall be the one who laughs last."

Now, among as many men as it takes to make up a company of soldiers, there is always certain to be at least one man who is a bully.

It was so in this case.

Among those who stood talking and laughing as Dick approached, was a burly, dark-faced fellow who held his comrades in constant terror on account of his savage disposition.

He was always on the lookout for a chance to raise a row.

If the row could be made to develop into a fight, he liked it all the better.

He never lost an opportunity to create a disturbance, and he thought that now he saw an opportunity.

"Say, watch me, fellows," he said, just before Dick and the captain reached the spot; "I'm going to put the country bumpkin through his paces!"

There were a number of the soldiers of the company who, to curry favor, always backed the bully up in his utterances and flattered him and fawned at his feet.

"That's the way to talk, Barton!" cried one.

The bully's name was Henry Barton.

"Go for him, Hank!"

"Give it to him!"

"Yes, yes; that'll be sport!"

"That's right; things are dull enough, and we don't get a chance to have much sport."

Thus encouraged, Barton was eager to get at Dick.

As soon as the captain announced that Dick was now a member of the company, Barton stepped forward and confronted the youth.

"What's your name?" he asked.

He glared at Dick fiercely, as he asked the question.

Dick saw that he was in for trouble.

He had seen too many such fellows in his time not to know that this fellow was a bully of the first water.

He looked Barton straight in the eyes, however, and there was a peculiar light there which puzzled the bully not a little.

Somehow, the expression in the supposed country youth's eyes was not in keeping with his general appearance.

Had the bully seen this light in the eyes of almost any one else, he would have looked upon it as a danger signal.

"My name is Bill Tompkins," replied Dick.

"Bill Tompkins, eh?"

"Yas."

"And you have just joined the British army?"

"Yas, mister."

"Humph! Has any one told you what is required of a new recruit?"

Dick simulated surprise, and a puzzled look appeared on his face.

He shook his head.

"No, nobuddy hain't sed nothin' ter me," he replied.

"Is that so?"

Barton pretended to be surprised.

"Yas, thet's so, mister."

"That is strange; well, I shall have to take it upon myself to tell you."

"All right, mister, I'm a-listenin'."

Barton looked at Dick, quickly and sharply.

There was something in the youth's tone which he did not like.

He went ahead, however, and said:

"It is required, always, when a new recruit enters the ranks, that he prove to the satisfaction of his comrades that he is brave enough to go into a battle and fight like the rest of the boys."

"Is thet so, mister?"

"Yes; you see he might be a rank coward who would run at the first fire from the enemy, and in that case he would do a great deal more harm than good. You understand?"

Dick nodded.

"Yas, I think I do," he replied. "Thet hain't a bad



idee, mister. I s'pose you want me ter prove thet I hain't er coward?"

"Yes; that is what we want you to do."

"How am I ter prove et, mister?"

"I'll tell you how. We will select a man from among our number, and you will have to fight him."

"Oh, thet's et?"

The redcoats were surprised to note that the youth did not seem to be very much alarmed.

Their idea, however, was that he did not as yet fully realize the situation.

"Yes, that's it," Barton said; "if you stand up like a man and put up a good fight, and you do not yell 'enough,' it will be considered that you are all right, and that it will be safe to have you in the ranks."

"Whut ef I do holler 'enough'?" asked Dick.

"Then it will be considered that you are not worthy of being a soldier in the king's army."

"Oh, thet's et, is et?"

"Yes; that is it," Barton replied.

Dick was silent a few moments, during which time the redcoats watched him closely.

Presently Dick looked Barton straight in the eyes, and said:

"S'posin' I make ther other feller holler 'enough', then whut?"

A roar of laughter greeted this question.

The redcoats, with the possible exception of Barton, were vastly amused.

Barton was not pleased, for the reason that he was to be the one who was to test the new recruit, and the bare thought of the country youth making him cry 'enough' was, he thought, absurd.

"Bah! You won't make any one cry 'enough'!" Barton sneered.

Dick elevated his eyebrows.

"Yo' think not, mister?"

"I know it."

Dick pretended to look puzzled.

"How kin yo' know et, mister?" he asked.

"That is simple enough," was the reply; "I know it because," Barton paused an instant and swelled out his chest, "I am the one you will have to fight."

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### DICK PROVES HIS COURAGE.

"Oh, is thet so?" said Dick.

He did not seem to be greatly surprised.

"Yes, that's so; and if you have any preparations to make, make them at once. The boys here are anxious to know whether you are a coward, or whether you are not."

"An' I guess yo' air anxious ter give me er poundin', hain't thet so, mister?" remarked Dick.

This was so nearly the truth of the matter that a number of the redcoats looked at each other and winked.

Barton grew red in the face.

He of course was well aware that it was his desire and intention to give the supposed country youth a good beating.

But even he was not lost to all sense of shame, and knowing that his comrades understood the matter thoroughly he could not help flushing.

"It doesn't matter whether I am anxious to give you a pounding or not, young fellow," Barton said, with as lofty an air as he could command. "It is my duty to put your courage to a test, and the only way I can do it is by thrashing you soundly."

"Oh, I see!"

Dick nodded just as if he believed the statement of the redcoat. Then he went on:

"Oh, I kin see yo' air not the kind uv a feller ez would wanten pound ennybuddy up jest fur fun," said Dick. "Eet's easy ter see thet yo' air a good-natured, tender-hearted sort uv a feller."

Several of the redcoats snickered.

The statement that Barton looked good natured and tender hearted was so comical that they could not help laughing.

This made Barton angry.

He grew red in the face.

"See here," he said, glaring at Dick fiercely; "don't you dare make fun of me, you young scoundrel; if you do it won't be good for you."

Dick assumed a look of astonishment.

"Don't yo' like whut I said erbout yo'?" he asked.

Barton hesitated.

"I don't like the way you said it," he replied.

"Mebby yo'd liked et better ef I'd er said yo' look like er black-muzzled pyrit," Dick remarked coolly and calmly.

The redcoats looked at Dick in amazement.

All save Barton.

He became furiously angry.

"See here, you young scoundrel!" he exclaimed, shaking his fist at Dick. "I don't believe I ever saw any one who needed thrashing more than you do."

Dick lifted his eyebrows.

"Is thet so?" he asked calmly.



"Yes, that's so; and I am going to give you the worst thrashing you ever had in your life!"

"Et'll be er bad one ef et's wusser'n whut dad hez giv' me lots uv times," remarked Dick, seemingly not in the least disconcerted by the prospect.

Once more a number of the redcoats snickered.

There was something amusing in the youth's words and manner.

"Step out here!" cried Barton. "There has been enough talking."

"All right, mister," replied Dick. "All I want'er ax is whut will yo' do when I make yo' holler 'enough'? Will yo' leave ther army?"

Again the redcoats laughed.

Very few of Barton's comrades liked him, and they could enjoy Dick's remarks at their comrade's expense.

Barton, however, did not enjoy it.

"Look out for yourself!" he cried.

He leaped forward and faced Dick.

"Now I'm going to go for you!" he cried fiercely.

"All right; I'm ready fur yo', mister," said Dick.

Instantly Barton leaped forward.

He struck at Dick fiercely.

Dick ducked, and dodged under the man's arm.

So hard had Barton struck that when he missed Dick he plunged forward.

As Dick dodged under the fellow's arm, he managed to trip him.

Barton lost his balance and plunged forward upon his face.

Dick whirled and looked down upon the redcoat in pretended amazement.

"Whut'd he fall down fur?" he asked. "I never tetched him."

The spectators stared in amazement.

The happening had been entirely unexpected.

Their idea had been that their comrade would knock the youth senseless at a single blow.

And had the blow aimed at Dick by the redcoat taken effect, such would probably have been the result, for the bully was a big, strong fellow, and had struck with all his force.

Barton scrambled hastily to his feet.

He had been angry before, but now he was wild with rage.

He would not have believed it possible that the supposed country youth could put him to the ground by either trick or force.

But he had done so.

Anxious to redeem himself, Barton rushed upon Dick with the ferocity of a tiger.

He did not depend upon one blow this time.

He would not risk missing a second time, so he began raining the blows upon the youth.

Dick had been sure that this would be the redcoat's plan of procedure, and he was ready for the fellow.

He gave way before the other, and retreated—not rapidly, but only so fast as was necessary.

He dodged, ducked, evaded and parried the blows, and so skillful was he that Barton was unable to land a single damaging blow.

Dick danced around as lightly as a dancing master.

So agile and graceful was he that his heavier and clumsier antagonist was made appear doubly heavy and clumsy.

Barton grew more and more enraged as he realized that his attempts at harming his youthful antagonist were unavailing.

Hoarse growls of rage escaped him.

He redoubled his efforts.

He followed Dick closely, and attempted to beat him to the ground.

To no avail.

He could not do it.

He was now tired.

He felt that he would soon become exhausted.

He was not accustomed to such violent exercise.

He realized that he could not stand much more of it.

He would keep up the attack as long as possible, however, in the hope that he might get in a blow.

He felt confident that if he could get in one good stroke the fight would be won.

But Dick would not let him land the blow.

The youth understood the situation fully as well as did Barton.

Presently the redcoat began to weaken perceptibly.

His blows came less frequently, and lacked force.

Up to this time Dick had been entirely on the defensive.

He had not as yet struck a single blow.

Now, however, he felt that the time had come for him to do something.

He suddenly surprised Barton by taking the offensive. The spectators, as well, were surprised.

In truth, they had been amazed at the very beginning.

They were beginning to think that this was the most remarkable country youth they had ever seen.

Barton was beginning to think so, too.

He was destined to realize it even more forcibly.

For a few moments Dick stood his ground, and contented himself with holding Barton in check.



Then he suddenly took advantage of an opening.

Out shot his fist.

It struck the redcoat in the chest, sending him reeling backward a distance of several feet.

It was a strong blow, and caused the spectators to open their eyes in amazement.

A long, drawn-out "Ah-h-h-h!" escaped the lips of the redcoats.

"Great guns! what a blow!"

"It was a hard one, and no mistake!"

"It came near flooring Barton!"

"Jove! but the youth is a terror, isn't he?"

Such were a few of the exclamations indulged in.

Barton was perhaps the most astonished man of them all.

He realized that his despised foe had come within an ace of knocking him down.

Barton began to realize that he had caught a Tartar.

He could not understand the matter at all.

However, he had no time, nor indeed any inclination to ponder over the affair.

He must accept the situation.

The instant he recovered his balance after staggering backward Barton gave utterance to a roar of anger and rushed forward to the attack.

He struck three or four blows, which were neatly parried, and then out shot Dick's left arm.

Thump!

Again Dick's fist struck his opponent in the chest and sent him reeling backward.

This time Dick followed up his advantage.

He leaped forward and struck the redcoat a terrific blow right over the heart.

Down went Barton at full length upon the ground.

There was a thud as he struck, and he gave utterance to a grunt of pain.

Again exclamations escaped the lips of the spectators.

"Wonderful!"

"Remarkable!"

"It beats anything I ever saw!"

"I would not have believed it possible had I not seen it with my own eyes!"

"The youth is a wonder!"

"Indeed, he is!"

Barton groaned aloud and writhed about, seemingly being in great pain.

His face was contorted and was anything but pleasing to look upon.

Dick, immediately after delivering the blows, had stepped back and folded his arms, and he now stood there,

quietly waiting for his opponent to get up and renew the combat.

Nearly a minute elapsed and then Barton rose to a sitting posture.

He had stopped groaning and writhing about, but it was evident from the look on his face that he was still in considerable pain.

"Git up, mister," said Dick, "ef yer goin' ter give me thet thrashin' yo' were talkin' erbout, yo'll hev ter git up an' git at et."

"Oh, I'll get up; never you fear!" hoarsely growled the redcoat. "And when I do, I'll make you wish that I hadn't; I'll have your heart's blood for this, you young scoundrel!"

"Sorry, but I hain't got no heart's blood ter spare, mister; I guess yo'll hev ter be content without et."

"You'll see!" growled Barton. "I say I'll have your heart's blood, and I mean it, too!"

"Sho! yo' don't say?" remarked Dick. "I wouldn't be ez bloodthirsty as yo' air fur anything in ther world, mister."

The spectators, who were watching Dick closely, were surprised by his calmness.

He did not seem to be at all worried.

They hardly knew what to attribute this to.

They could not make up their minds as to whether the youth was really extraordinarily brave or whether he simply did not understand that he was in great danger.

For he was in great danger, as the redcoats well knew.

They knew Barton thoroughly.

They were well aware that after having been handled so roughly by his despised antagonist, Barton would not be satisfied until he had revenged himself upon the youth.

Barton slowly struggled to his feet.

He kept a wary eye on Dick as he did so.

He feared that the youth might rush upon him.

He knew that had their positions been reversed, he would have done so and he judged Dick by himself.

But Dick was too fair-minded for that.

He would not take advantage of his opponent.

He felt confident that he could handle Barton, anyway.

By being even fairer than the usages of such a combat required, he would gain the good will of the other redcoats.

So Dick stood quietly in his tracks and waited for his opponent to get ready.

He did not have to wait long.

Barton was eager to revenge himself upon the youth who had humiliated him in the presence of his comrades.



As soon as he had got straightened up, he rushed forward.

He struck at the youth, fiercely, desperately.

Dick gave ground for a few moments, then, the other's strength suddenly giving out, the youth took the offensive.

Out shot his left fist straight for the redcoat's face.

Barton threw up his arm to ward off the blow.

This was what Dick had expected he would do.

It gave the youth the opening he was looking for.

Out shot his right fist.

The first blow had been merely a feint, but this one was not.

The fist struck Barton in the pit of the stomach and doubled him forward; at the same instant the youth's left fist came up and landed with terrible force on the redcoat's jaw.

Down went Barton as if he had been struck by a cannon-ball.

He struck the ground with a thud, and lay still.

He had been knocked senseless by the terrible blow.

Cries of wonder escaped the redcoats.

## CHAPTER V.

### A TRICKY GUIDE.

"That beats anything I ever saw!"

"It was a wonderful blow!"

"Yes, yes!"

"He has knocked Barton senseless!"

"So he has!"

"Yes, and has done a good thing, too!"

Such were a few of the exclamations.

It was plain that the majority of the soldiers did not have much love for the fallen man.

One slapped Dick on the shoulder.

"I am glad that you gave him a good thrashing," he said; "but I don't understand, yet, how you were able to do it. He was a terror, and has thrashed every one of the boys who dared to stand up in front of him."

"Oh, he wuzn't so very hard ter lick," said Dick; "not ez hard ez I thort he would be before we got at et."

"Well, I hope and trust that you have taught him a lesson that will be of value to him."

"I hope so, too, mister; I don't like them thar bullies very well, myse'f."

"Nor does any one else."

Four of the soldiers lifted Barton and bore him into one of the tents, and placed him on his cot.

Then they began the work of resuscitation.

They bathed the insensible man's face with water.

They forced some liquor down his throat.

They rubbed his arms and legs.

These measures were effective.

Barton soon returned to consciousness.

He opened his eyes and looked wonderingly about him.

"Where am I?" he asked, feebly. "What has happened?"

It happened that the four who had brought Barton into the tent, and who were working with him, were his cronies.

They told him where he was, and what had happened.

Barton listened to the story, and when it was finished he groaned.

"It's all up with me!" he said, bitterly, when the men had finished. "I have been whipped, and by a gawky country lout! I am disgraced forever! I shall never be able to hold up my head again. I shall apply to headquarters for a transfer to some other company. I don't want to stay in this one any longer."

"I don't blame you," said one of the soldiers; "it would be tough to have to be in the same company with that lout!"

"I could not endure it!"

Barton's comrades were surprised to see him so quiet.

They had expected that he would rave and curse, and be for going out at once and killing the youth who had disgraced him.

The truth of the matter was that the terrible blow in the pit of the stomach had taken all the fight out of the fellow.

He felt strangely weak.

He felt as if he could not stand, if he were to get upon his feet.

There is no doubt that he would have liked to secure revenge on the youth, but at present he would have to let the matter rest.

He intimated as much to his comrades when they asked him if he was not going to try to get square with the youth.

"Some time, boys," Barton said; "some time, but not right now. Why, I'm as weak as a cat, and would stand no chance against the young scoundrel—none, whatever."

Dick was the hero of the hour.

The soldiers praised him, and told him he had done a good thing.

"Wish you had come along sooner," said one redcoat, jocularly; "it would have saved a number of us fellows from getting roughly handled by that bully."



"I'm glad I done er good thing," said Dick, modestly; "I didn't want no trubble with 'im, but he would hev et, an' so I went in ter giv' 'im ther bes' I could."

"And that was plenty good enough to lay him on the shelf!"

Dick spent the rest of the afternoon and evening talking with his comrades of the company, and he ate supper with them.

They sat up till about ten o'clock at night, and talked and laughed and told stories, and then all entered the tents and threw themselves down upon their cots.

In half an hour or so the majority were sound asleep and snoring.

But Dick was not asleep.

He was as wide awake as ever he was in his life.

He had important work ahead of him, and there would be no sleep for him for several hours—if at all, that night.

He was determined to slip away, and press onward to Charleston.

He had important messages for General Lincoln, from the commander-in-chief, and they must be delivered.

Then, too, he was in great danger every moment that he remained in the British encampment with the important papers in his possession.

He might be suspected and searched.

The papers would then, inevitably, be found.

That would be fatal.

He would be shot or hanged.

Dick was determined that he would not give the redcoats any more chance than was absolutely necessary.

So he lay there in his cot, wide awake and eager, waiting for the time to come to slip away.

He had asked some questions that afternoon and evening.

He had learned that it was about four miles to Charleston.

He must reach the city, deliver the messages to General Lincoln, and then get back to the British encampment and into his tent and cot without his absence having been discovered, if such a thing was possible.

Dick thought it might be accomplished.

He was ready to attempt it, at any rate.

He waited half an hour longer.

Then he raised himself on his elbow and listened.

It was quite dark within the tent.

Dick could see nothing.

The labored breathing of his comrades came to Dick's hearing.

"I guess it is safe to make the attempt now," thought the youth.

He left the cot and stole toward the entrance of the tent.

He lifted the flap slightly and looked out.

All was dark outside.

The camp-fires were out.

There was no moon, for which Dick was thankful.

The darkness would veil his movements.

He pushed the flap to one side, and emerged from the tent.

He stood still and listened for a few moments.

No sound came to his hearing.

Dick realized that he was in an exceedingly dangerous situation.

Discovery and capture meant death.

But he did not hesitate.

He had encountered so many dangers during the time he had been playing the part of a spy for the patriot army that he had become, in a measure, calloused to it.

Thought of danger to himself did not worry him much.

Indeed, what troubled him most, when thoughts that he might be captured came to him, was that he might fail to deliver the important messages, or that he might not be able to carry the important information which he may have secured, to the commander-in-chief.

Presently Dick moved forward.

He moved slowly and cautiously.

He had taken pains during the evening to find out where the sentinels were stationed.

This knowledge would be of inestimable advantage to him now.

He could thus avoid the sentinels in leaving the camp.

Dick made his way in a direction which would lead him between the points where two sentinels were stationed.

He presently reached the edge of the encampment.

He entered the timber beyond.

He moved very slowly and cautiously, now, for he knew that he was close to the sentinels.

He was an old hand at this kind of work, however.

He stole through the timber with all the skill and silence of an Indian warrior.

He made no sound whatever.

He was not challenged, and presently, when confident that he was safely through the lines, he increased his speed.

He walked onward at a swinging gait, and an hour later was entering the suburbs of Charleston.

He was hailed by a sentinel.

"Halt! Who comes there?"

"A friend," replied Dick.

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign!" was the order.

Dick approached the sentinel.



"I do not know the countersign," he said; "I am a special messenger from the north. I am from the commander-in-chief, and bring important messages for General Lincoln."

"Ah! Who are you?" the sentinel asked.

"My name is Dick Slater."

"What! not Dick Slater, the boy spy?"

"The same," replied Dick. "Now, I will pass on, if you please, as it is important that the messages be placed in the general's hands at the earliest possible moment."

"Yes, yes! Pass on, Dick Slater!" the sentinel cried. "I know of you. I have heard many stories about you, and am glad that I have met you!"

"Thank you," said Dick, and then he hurried onward.

He made his way rapidly down the street.

Presently he was in the heart of the city.

He stopped a patriot soldier, and asked to be directed to the headquarters of General Lincoln.

"This way," said the soldier. "I will show you the house."

He led the way down the street a couple of blocks, turned to the left, and continued on in that direction two or three blocks, then turned again to the right, and presently Dick noticed that they were approaching the water front.

Suddenly a suspicion of his companion entered Dick's mind.

Surely General Lincoln's headquarters were not down in this part of the city!

Then, either the soldier who had conducted Dick hither was drunk, and did not know where he was going, or he was a scoundrel up to some trick.

If the latter, then Dick wished to learn the truth as quickly as possible.

They were within less than a block of the docks, when the youth paused.

"Wait a bit, my friend," he said. "Did you understand me to say that I wished to be shown to the headquarters of General Lincoln?"

"I so understood you," was the reply.

"Then why have you brought me away down here to the wharves? Surely the general's headquarters are not here?"

"No, but your grave is here!" hissed the man, and with the words he hurled himself upon the youth.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A BATTLE ROYAL.

Dick, as we have said, had become suspicious, so he was not taken wholly by surprise.

Indeed, he had more than half expected that he would be attacked, and had nerved himself for the encounter.

The result was that instead of being taken at a disadvantage, he was enabled to place himself on practically even terms with his assailant.

It happened that there was a lamp post not far distant, and while the light was very bad, it was sufficient to enable Dick to see the flash of steel, and make it possible for him to catch the man by the wrists.

A snarling curse escaped the lips of the youth's assailant when he found his wrists seized.

He attempted to wrench them loose.

He was unable to do so.

He was strong, but Dick was fully as strong, if not stronger.

The man soon discovered this fact.

It made him almost wild with rage.

"Let go my wrists, you cursed rebel spy!" the fellow hissed.

"And let you stick me with that knife?" remarked Dick.

"I rather think I shall do nothing of the kind! So you are not a patriot soldier at all, but a redcoat spy in disguise, eh?"

"That is what I am, curse you! I don't mind acknowledging it to you, for I am going to kill you, and you will never tell any one!"

"We will see about that!" retorted Dick grimly. "You haven't accomplished this yet, and I don't think you will."

The two struggled fiercely.

Now that Dick realized that he had hold of a British spy, he was eager to capture the fellow.

He put forth all his strength.

He gave the redcoat's wrist a sudden, terrible twist, and with a cry of pain the fellow dropped the knife.

It struck the pavement with a clang.

"There! Now we are on an even basis," said Dick, with an air of satisfaction; "you won't stick me with that knife, and I think I shall be able to master you."

"Never!" hissed the redcoat. "Curse you, you cannot do it! You could not do it in a thousand years!"

"I can do it in much less than a thousand seconds!" retorted Dick.

Then he redoubled his efforts.

Suddenly he gave the fellow's wrist another terrible twist, bringing a cry of pain from the redcoat, and then he seized the man by the throat.

"Ah, now I have you!" said Dick grimly. "I will speedily choke you into insensibility. I judge the next



time you will be careful whom you select to try to play tricks upon!"

Then the youth compressed the redcoat's windpipe in that terrible grip of his, and the fellow gasped and gurgled at a great rate.

He saw now that he had, indeed, caught a Tartar.

He had been shrewd enough to suspect that Dick was a patriot messenger, and had led him off to this lonely place for the purpose of killing him and securing the papers.

He had not thought that he would have any difficulty in doing this.

He saw that Dick was only a youth, and supposed he would be able to handle him easily.

He was now learning his mistake.

Too late, he realized that instead of victimizing the youth he would be the victim.

He struggled fiercely; however.

He thought that he might even yet succeed in getting the better of the youth.

He tried to trip Dick.

The youth simply laughed aloud.

"You are wasting your time and strength," said Dick.

"You are absolutely powerless, my friend, and might as well give up."

The disguised redcoat would not do this, however.

He kept on struggling.

His struggles grew more and more feeble, however, and presently he sank to the ground.

Dick at first suspected a trick, but soon saw that there was no shamming about it; the fellow was almost senseless, and was wholly helpless.

Dick turned the man over onto his face, and quickly bound his wrists together with a stout handkerchief.

Then he straightened up.

He drew a long breath.

"Phew! that was a little encounter!" he murmured.

"That fellow meant to put me out of the way; there is no doubt about that."

Dick looked about him.

No one was in sight.

All was quiet.

"He could have done it in safety, so far as being seen is concerned," thought the youth. "Here I have him lying flat on his back, seemingly dead, and no one near to accuse me of murder."

Dick waited till the man on the ground moved and gave utterance to a groan.

"Ah! he's coming to," thought Dick. "Good! I'm

glad of that, for I don't want to be delayed any longer than is necessary."

A few moments later the man gave utterance to a louder groan, and rose to a sitting posture.

Dick had stepped back a pace, and now stood looking down upon his late foe.

The fellow made an effort to free his hands.

Then he looked up at Dick.

"What does this mean?" he asked.

"What does it mean?"

"Yes."

"It seems to me that you ought to know."

"Well, I don't."

"You do not?"

"No."

"That is strange."

"Maybe it is."

"There is no mistake about that, my friend."

"How came I here in this fix?"

"I guess you know, don't you?"

The fellow shook his head.

"I must say that I do not," he replied.

"Then I must say that you are the champion liar!" said Dick calmly.

"What's that?"

"You heard what I said."

"Yes, I did; but I don't understand why you should say what you did. I have not the least idea why I am here, and in this fix. Who tied my wrists?"

"I did."

"Why?"

"Why?"

"Yes."

Dick laughed in a sarcastic manner.

"You are a pretty good actor, my friend," he said; "but you can't fool me. You can't make me think that you don't know why your hands are tied."

"But I don't know."

"Bosh!"

"No bosh about it. Why are they tied, and who are you?"

"It doesn't matter who I am," replied Dick sternly.

"It is enough that I know what you are, you redcoat spy!"

"What's that?" the man cried. "What is that you call me?"

"A redcoat spy."

"What! I a spy?"

"Yes."

"Whatever put that idea in your head?"



The man tried to put honesty and frankness into his tones, but it was hard work.

"The fact that you tried to murder me is what put the idea in my head."

"You don't mean to say that I tried to murder you?" the fellow exclaimed. "Surely you are mistaken."

Dick shook his head.

"No, I am not mistaken. You led me off down here, as you well know, and then tried to kill me."

"You say I did this?"

The man simulated amazement quite successfully. He was, indeed, a very good actor.

"You know you did it," said Dick sternly; "and now get up. You are to go with me to headquarters."

"Me go with you?"

"Yes."

"To headquarters?"

"Yes."

"What for?"

"Why, so that the general may see you, and then send you to the guard-house."

"Send me to the guard-house!"

"Yes."

"Why, I'm a patriot soldier!"

"Yes, you're a patriot soldier!" he said, sarcastically.

"You are a scoundrelly redcoat!"

"I assure you you are mistaken," the fellow insisted.

"Look at my uniform."

"Stolen from some dead patriot soldier!"

"No, no! You are mistaken!"

"I don't think so. Get up!"

Dick caught hold of the fellow and assisted him to rise. The youth took his late assailant by the arm.

"Come along, now, and don't make any fuss about it," he said.

The man walked along with him, but kept protesting.

"It is all a mistake," he asserted. "I don't understand the matter at all. I must have been drunk, if I led you down here and then attacked you, as you say I did."

"No, you were not drunk, my friend," said Dick.

"Then what ailed me, that is what I should like to know?"

"I'm sure I will not tell you," said Dick; "you ought to know better than any one else."

"Well, I don't; and do you know, I have no remembrance of having seen you before the moment that I recovered consciousness, back yonder, when I was lying on the ground with you standing over me?"

"Come, come; don't tell me any such stories as that!" said Dick. "You surely do not expect me to believe them?"

"It is the truth!" was the dogged reply.

Dick was silent for a few moments, during which time they walked onward, and then he said:

"You say you are a patriot soldier?"

"I am," was the reply.

"Very well; then you will have no objections to appearing before General Lincoln."

The man was at a loss what to say for a few moments, and then he said:

"I have no objections to appearing before him; but I dislike to appear in this fix—with my hands bound."

"Oh, you don't fancy that, eh?"

"No."

"Well, I am afraid you will have to do it, whether you fancy it or not."

"You won't free my hands, then?"

"Most certainly I will not!"

"But think of how cheap I shall feel!"

"And think of how silly I should be to free your hands, after you have just tried to take my life!"

"That was all a mistake; I was not responsible when I did that."

"Well, you see, I am afraid you might have another such spell, and I am not willing to take the chances."

"You need not be afraid; I don't have such a spell more than once in six months."

"Is that so?"

"Yes."

"Well, that is a great deal too often. I think you should be placed where you won't have an opportunity to injure any one when another spell comes on you."

"But I won't have another such spell."

"I'm afraid to risk it, my friend."

They had been walking steadily onward, and were now back in the heart of the city.

Presently they encountered a man who was hurrying along, and Dick accosted him.

"Will you tell me where General Lincoln has his headquarters, sir?" Dick asked.

The man paused, gave the two a curious look, and replied:

"Certainly, sir. The general's headquarters are just two blocks farther up the street—the first house in the third block, on the right-hand side of the street."

"Thank you."

Then Dick and his prisoner walked on, the citizen staring after them in wonder.

The two were soon in front of the building.

Dick maintained a tight grip on the arm of his com-



panion, for he thought it likely the fellow might try to bolt.

And the man certainly would have tried to do so had he thought there was any chance that he might succeed.

He had felt the iron-like grip of the youth on his throat, however, and now as he felt it on his arm he realized that it would be folly for him to attempt to get away.

It would be useless.

So he ascended the steps without trying to hold back, and stood, pale and trembling, and waited for some one to come to the door in answer to Dick's knock.

Presently steps were heard approaching, and then there was a fumbling at the door.

Next, the door opened.

A man stood there, candle in hand.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" he asked.

"I am a special messenger from the commander-in-chief of the Continental army," replied Dick; "and I have important papers for General Lincoln. I must see him at once."

"Ah, indeed! Come in!" the man said.

Dick and his companion stepped across the threshold, and the man closed the door and barred it.

"This way," he said, and he led the way into a large waiting-room, and, indicating chairs, invited the two to be seated.

"I will arouse the general and tell him you are here," he remarked. "Who shall I say you are?" this to Dick.

"Tell him that Dick Slater is here, from the commander-in-chief."

The man bowed and withdrew.

Dick turned his eyes toward his companion and saw that the man was staring at him in open-mouthed amazement.

"So you are Dick Slater?" he remarked. "Now I understand why you were too much for me!"

Dick smiled, but said nothing.

Ten minutes passed and then footsteps were heard.

A few moments later and the orderly entered the room, followed by a large, good-natured-looking man—evidently General Lincoln.

"This is the young man, Dick Slater, sir," the orderly said, indicating the youth.

The general advanced and gave his hand to Dick.

"I am glad to meet you!" he said. "And you are a messenger from the commander-in-chief?"

"Yes, sir," replied Dick.

Then he pointed to his companion.

"General Lincoln," he said, impressively, "I think you

had better have this man searched and taken to the guard-house."

"Ah, indeed! Why so?" the general asked. "Who, and what is he?"

"I don't know who he is, sir, but I am confident that I know what he is."

"What, if I may ask?"

"A British spy!"

## CHAPTER VII.

### DICK IS ACCUSED OF BEING A SPY.

General Lincoln was greatly surprised.

He stared from Dick to the man in wonder.

"Why do you think he is a spy?" he asked.

Then Dick told him the adventure he had had with the fellow.

"Well, well; he is certainly a dangerous character," the general said, when Dick had finished. "I will have him searched at once. Orderly!"

The orderly entered.

General Lincoln pointed to the prisoner, who sat, sullen-faced, listening to all that was said, and ordered:

"Search him!"

The orderly obeyed.

He searched the man thoroughly, and placed the articles which he had found before the general, on the table.

There were a few such things as might have been expected—a knife, pipe, tobacco, a little British gold and a folded paper.

The general opened the paper and looked it over.

"You were right in thinking him a spy, Dick," said the general; "this is an order from General Clinton to one of the under officers."

"I knew he was a British spy!" said Dick.

The fellow glowered at the youth.

"I'll remember you, Dick Slater!" he said. "And I'll try to pay the debt I owe you, one of these days."

"You'll do well to get out of this with your life," replied Dick. "If I were you, I would not be thinking or talking of revenge."

The fellow mumbled something unintelligible.

Doubtless he realized that it would be best for him not to say too much.

The orderly was sent to summon a couple of soldiers, and when they came they were instructed to take the prisoner to the guard-house.



"Don't let him escape," warned General Lincoln; "he is a British spy!"

"We will see to it that he does not escape, General Lincoln," replied one of the soldiers, and then they marched the prisoner off.

The instant they were gone, Dick drew the messages from his pocket and handed them to the general.

"There are some messages which I bring from the commander-in-chief," he said.

The general took the papers and read them as quickly as possible.

"These are orders for me to evacuate Charleston!" exclaimed the general, when he had finished.

Dick bowed.

"So the commander-in-chief informed me," he said.

"But I don't see how I am to evacuate the city, now."

"I don't see how you are to do it, myself," coincided Dick.

"I have sent out spies," the general went on, "and they report to me that the city is entirely surrounded by the British."

Dick nodded.

"They reported only the facts," he said; "such is the case."

"Then how am I to evacuate the city?"

General Lincoln looked distressed.

Dick shook his head.

"I don't see how you can do it," he said.

"Then what am I to do?"

The general's voice was almost despairing in tone.

"There is only one thing to do, so far as I can see."

"And what is that?"

"To remain where you are and hold out as long as possible."

The general pondered a few moments.

"I judge that is the best thing to do," he agreed.

They talked for some time longer, and then the general asked:

"What will you do—remain here?"

Dick shook his head.

"No," he replied; "I must leave, and at once. I must be back within the British lines before daylight."

Then he explained how he was at present posing as a new recruit to the British army.

Presently he bade the general good-night, and took his departure.

He hastened out of the city and made his way in the direction of the British encampment as rapidly as he could go.

He was not more than an hour in reaching the en-

campment, and slipping between the sentinels, entered and soon reached the tent in which he had been given a cot.

He entered, silently, and making his way to the cot, lay down and was soon asleep.

Dick had done a deal of thinking while returning from Charleston, and had decided to remain in the British line for at least another day.

He wished to learn how completely surrounded the city was, and if there was the least chance for the patriot army to evacuate the city, he would return to General Lincoln and tell him.

Just as he finished eating his breakfast next morning a captain and a couple of soldiers came and arrested Dick.

"What is this fur?" the youth asked. "W'y hev yo' done this?"

"Orders," was the gruff reply. "You must come along with us."

Dick's comrades, who had taking to the youth because of the fact that he had thrashed Barton, inquired what the trouble was, but the soldiers either could not or would not tell, and Dick was marched off to a rude log building at the edge of the timber.

This was the guard-house, and there was no one else in it.

"We shall have to bind your arms," said the captain; "this old building isn't very strong, and you might take French leave."

The two soldiers quickly bound Dick's arms together behind his back.

"Will yo' tell me w'y yo' hev done this?" asked Dick. "Whut hev I done, thet they sh'd put me in heer?"

"Well, I'll tell you, young fellow," replied the captain in a confidential tone. "You are accused of being a rebel spy."

"Who, me?" Dick exclaimed, in amazement.

"Yes, you."

"I don' see how they got thet idee inter theer heads," he said. "I hain't no spy, an' I hain't done nothin' to make ennybuddy think I'm one, neether."

"Is that so?"

"Yas."

"How about this matter of coming slipping into your tent at a late hour this morning, from no one knowing where?"

Dick gave a slight start.

"Who says I done thet?" he asked.

"One of your comrades who sleeps in the same tent," was the reply.

"So some one has tole thet, hey?" Dick remarked.

"Yes; isn't it true?"

Dick shook his head.



"No; et's er lie!"

The captain laughed.

"Of course you would deny it," he said. "I don't blame you for doing so."

"Uv course I'll deny et," said Dick; "fu et hain't so. Ther feller, whoever he is, mus' hev er grudge ag'in ne."

"You think so?"

"Yas; he mus' be er frien' uv thet thar Barton thet I ticked. I 'xpect thet Barton put 'im up ter tellin' ther story."

The captain looked thoughtful.

"Well, I'm not the one to pass on your case," he said.

"There may be something in what you say, but you will have to make some one higher in authority than myself believe it before it will do any good."

Then the captain and the two soldiers withdrew.

Dick did not like his situation at all.

He wished now, that he had not decided to remain in the British encampment another day.

"Had I gone on last night—or this morning, rather, and not stopped in the camp, I should have been all right," he thought. "Well, I must make the best of the situation."

Dick waited as patiently as he could, and was glad when about ten o'clock the door of the cabin opened and a couple of soldiers put in an appearance.

"Come," one said; "you are to go with us."

"Whar to?" asked Dick.

"You'll find out soon enough."

Dick was conducted to a log building at some distance from the guard house.

This log house was occupied by the colonel of the regiment, in which was the company that Dick had become a member of.

Dick was given a seat in front of where the colonel sat.

The youth looked around upon the faces of those present and saw that Barton was one of the number.

Beside him was another fellow whom Dick recognized as being one of Barton's cronies.

"There is where the trouble lies," thought Dick. "That fellow sitting beside Barton is the one who has caused me to be arrested; he has a cot in the same tent that I slept in, and it may be possible that he was awake when I came in this morning."

The colonel presently looked at Dick, and said:

"What is your name?"

"Bill Tompkins, mister," the youth replied.

"Bill Tompkins, eh?"

"Yas, sir."

"You are sure it isn't something else?"

"I'm shore uv et, mister."

The colonel eyed Dick searchingly, the youth returning the look unflinchingly.

"You are accused of being a rebel spy," the officer said. "What have you to say to the charge?"

"I say ez how et hain't so, mister," replied Dick promptly.

The colonel turned his eyes on the man sitting beside Barton.

"Graves, tell your story," he ordered.

"Very well, Colonel Wilson," the fellow replied; and then he went on:

"I slept in the same tent with this fellow," indicating Dick, "last night; and at about four o'clock this morning I was awakened by a noise. I opened my eyes, and saw this fellow enter the tent, slip to his cot, and lie down. It made me suspicious, and I reported the circumstances, as you know, and the young fellow was arrested."

The colonel nodded.

"I understand," he said; "and it was your idea that this young man, Tompkins, was a spy?"

"Yes, sir; I thought that it was likely he had been inside the rebel lines to carry information."

The colonel turned his eyes on Dick.

"You were out of your tent last night?" he asked.

Dick shook his head.

"No, mister, I wuzn't," he replied promptly.

The fellow who had caused his arrest glared angrily at Dick, as did Barton, but it had no effect on the youth.

Colonel Wilson looked surprised.

"Do you really mean to say that you were not out of the tent?" he asked, eyeing Dick sternly.

Dick nodded.

"Thet is jes' whut I do mean ter say, mister," he replied decidedly.

The fellow whom the colonel had addressed as Graves started to say something, but was stopped by a wave of the colonel's hand.

"What purpose could Graves, here, have had in saying you were away from the tent, if you were not?" he asked.

"I think I know w'y he tol' thet story, mister," said Dick.

"You do?"

"Yas."

The colonel looked surprised; the two soldiers, Barton and Graves looked suspicious.



"Well, why did he tell it, in your opinion?" the colonel asked.

"Wal, I think thet ther reezon he tol' thet story is bec'os he is ther frien' uv thet feller," and Dick pointed at Barton.

The colonel looked still more surprised.

"Why should that fact influence him to tell the story, as you call it?" he asked.

"Bec'os he is ther frien' uv thet feller is w'y he tol' thet story, I'm shore," said Dick. "You know, I giv' thet feller er good lickin' yisterday evenin', an' they made up theer min's ter git even with me, an' tol' this heer story erbout me—w'ich hain't so, mister."

"That is false, Colonel Wilson!" cried Graves. "Don't let him pull the wool over your eyes. He is, I am confident, an exceedingly shrewd and dangerous fellow."

"There is no doubt regarding that, Colonel Wilson," said Barton. "No country greenhorn could possibly fight as he is able to fight. He is a dangerous fellow, and is, I would be willing to wager a year's pay, a rebel spy."

"Don' yo' b'leeve 'em, mister," said Dick; "they air jes' mad at me, thet's all. Theer hain't no truth in thet story thet feller tol' erbout me a-comin' inter thet tent this mornin'. I laid down at thet same time thet rest did, an' I never lef' there tent till I come out this mornin' ter git my breakfas'."

The colonel was evidently puzzled. He seemed at a loss to know what to do.

The two soldiers noted this fact, and fearing that the officer might decide to let Dick remain at large, said:

"Don't let him deceive you, colonel. He is a deep scoundrel, and may do a lot of damage if he is let run free."

"Then yo'd better lock them fellers up, too, colonel," said Dick. "They air ez lieble ter do damidge ez me."

The colonel studied a few moments.

"I guess I shall be forced to hold you a prisoner until General Clinton comes," he said. "He will be here to-morrow."

"That will be the wisest thing to do," said Barton, and there was a triumphant look in his eyes as he looked at Dick.

"Uv course yo' kin do ez yo' like, mister," said Dick; "but yo' air makin' er mistake, fur I hain't no spy."

"I will let General Clinton be the judge regarding that," the colonel replied, and then he ordered the two soldiers who had conducted Dick to the cabin to take him back to the guard house.

They obeyed, and five minutes later the youth was again alone in the cabin.

"Jove! I don't like this!" thought Dick. "The boys will probably arrive in the vicinity some time to-day, and they will expect me to be on hand. I won't be there, and they won't know what to think of my disappearance."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE OLD MAN OF THE CAVERN.

About noon of this same day a body of horsemen were making their way along the road leading through the timber at a point about ten miles north from Charleston.

It was the same road over which Dick Slater had been traveling when we introduced him to the reader's notice at the beginning of this story.

There were about one hundred in the party, which was made up, as the reader has no doubt suspected, of the "Liberty Boys of '76."

At the head of the party rode a bright-faced, handsome fellow, seemingly nineteen or twenty years of age.

This youth was Bob Estabrook, Dick Slater's best friend and right-hand man.

Dick was captain of the company, but when he was away from it Bob was always placed in command.

The "Liberty Boys" were as brave a lot of youths as were ever banded together.

They had proven this on many occasions.

They were youths of whom with truth it might be said that they would rather fight than eat.

Suddenly Bob gave the command to halt.

"It is dinner time, boys," he said, "and we may as well stop and eat our lunch. Then, too, I think we have ventured as near Charleston as is advisable until we are rejoined by Dick. He was to meet us here on this road by noon to-day, you know."

"That's right," agreed Mark Morrison; "we might as well eat our lunch, and then we can wait till Dick comes."

"I'll tell you what I think we had better do," said Bob. "We had better ride into the timber a ways before dismounting. A band of redcoats might come upon us, you know, and we don't want to have to do any fighting until after Dick comes back."

"That's right," said Mark. "We don't want the redcoats to even know that we are in the neighborhood."

"True," agreed Bob. "A couple of you boys will have to remain here on guard, however, as Dick might be coming back and pass by without knowing we were anywhere near."



Bob named two of the youths for guard duty, and they dismounted and handed their bridle reins to a couple of their comrades. Then they took some food out of their saddle bags, after which one said:

"Go ahead, boys; we're all right; Dick won't get past us."

The "Liberty Boys," with the exception of the two, entered the timber.

They followed a sort of trail through the timber, and when they had proceeded a distance of seventy-five yards they suddenly emerged into an open space semi-circular in shape, and perhaps fifty yards wide by one hundred long.

At the opposite side of the open space was, not more a number, but an abyss, seemingly more than a hundred feet deep.

"Hello! I wasn't expecting anything of that kind," said Bob.

"Nor I," replied Mark Morrison; "but I'm not surprised. The country is quite hilly and broken around here, and such deep ravines or gullies are likely to be found."

"So they are, Mark, and—great guns! look yonder! As you live, there is a uniform of a patriot soldier lying on the ground."

"You are right!" exclaimed Mark Morrison, excitedly. "This is a strange affair."

Exclamations escaped the lips of all the "Liberty Boys." They dismounted in a hurry.

They hastened forward.

The uniform in question lay right on the brink of the precipice.

The entire uniform was not there.

There was a hat and coat only, and beside those lay a musket.

"It is a captain's uniform," said Sam Sanderson.

Bob picked the coat up and looked at it closely.

"Great guns, fellows!" he exclaimed, "this is Dick's uniform; I would know it anywhere, and this is his hat and his musket."

"By Jove, you are right!" cried Mark Morrison.

The other youths, too, recognized Dick's coat and hat and gun, and gave utterance to exclamations of amazement and wonder.

The youths hardly knew what to think.

They stared at one another, questioningly.

Where was Dick?

How came his uniform to be lying there?

These were the questions they asked themselves, but which they could not answer.

"I fear Dick has fallen over the bluff," said Mark Morrison.

"I don't think that, for, as you see, here are his coat, hat and gun," replied Bob; "but it is a mysterious affair."

"Maybe Dick was waylaid by redcoats or Tories and murdered and his body brought here and thrown over the precipice," said Sam Sanderson.

Bob shook his head.

"I hardly think that," he said; "had they done so and robbed him of his clothing, they would certainly have taken it with them, would they not?"

"One would think so," said Mark Morrison.

The "Liberty Boys" were greatly worried.

They could not account for the presence of Dick's uniform there on the brink of the precipice in any other way than that something had happened to their brave young commander.

Their idea had been that Dick had long since reached Charleston and delivered the messages of which he was bearer, into the hands of General Lincoln and that he was in all probability close at hand on his way back from Charleston to meet them as he had agreed.

But now the finding of his uniform had changed their views materially.

They feared that Dick had met with foul play.

They were already greatly worried, but if Dick did not put in an appearance some time during that afternoon, they would not know what to think.

The youths crept to the edge of the precipice and peered down into the abyss.

Far down, a hundred feet at least, they could see the bottom of the abyss.

But they could see nothing which looked like the body of a human being.

Suddenly Mark Morrison uttered an exclamation.

"Look here, fellows, here's a rope!" he cried.

The others crowded forward and looked in the direction indicated.

A few feet distant a large tree stood on the very brink of the abyss.

Many of the roots of the tree had been left exposed by the crumbling away of the dirt from about them and to one of these roots a rope was tied.

The youths became excited.

What could it mean? they asked themselves.

Why was the rope there?

They crowded around the tree and holding to it, leaned out as far as they dared and looked down.

Several of the youths lay down on their faces and peered over the edge of the precipice.



They saw that the rope was about thirty feet in length.

The rope lay right along the face of the bluff and at a point about thirty feet down a ledge projected out from the rocky wall.

The ledge was about four feet wide and was covered with bushes.

"What do you think about this, anyway, Bob?" asked Mark.

"I hardly know, Mark, but there is one thing that seems reasonably certain."

"What is that?"

"That there is a hiding place down there."

"Just what I think; there is a cavern in the side of the bluff, likely."

"Undoubtedly, Mark."

The youths looked at Bob with eager eyes.

"You think Dick is down there?" asked Sam Sanderson.

Bob shook his head.

"I hardly think so," he replied; "we'll find out, though, and that very quickly."

"How are you going to do it?" asked Mark.

"I am going down there!"

"I wouldn't do it if I were you, Bob," said Sam; "there's no telling who or what you may find down there."

"Oh, I don't think there is any danger," said Bob, carelessly.

He threw off his coat and hat and then swung himself down underneath the great roots which projected out over the precipice.

Taking hold of the rope, Bob placed his feet against the wall and worked his way slowly downward until he came to the projecting ledge.

"Now, look out, Bob!" warned Mark. "Don't be rash; take things easy and look before you leap."

"Here's a cave, fellows, all right!" called up Bob. "I'll investigate."

"Maybe some of the rest of us had better come down," said Mark.

"I don't think it will be necessary, Mark; if I need any help I'll yell."

"All right; see that you do."

Bob drew his pistol and stepped forward.

Right before him was an opening in the face of the bluff.

The opening was about five feet high and three feet wide.

Stooping, Bob stepped through the opening.

As he did so he was given a shock.

A wild, inarticulate cry startled him and he felt himself seized by strong hands.

Bob had been seized in such a manner that he could not

use his pistol, and so, dropping it, he engaged in a hand-to-hand combat with his assailant.

It was not very dark in the cavern, and Bob got a look at his assailant.

To his surprise he saw an old man with long, gray hair and beard, and gaunt features.

The old man's clothes were rags, and, taken as a whole, he did not present a very pleasing appearance.

"Jove! he must be a madman," thought Bob, and a thrill of horror went through him.

He began struggling with the old man with all his energy.

Strange to say, he never thought to call out to his friends above for help.

The struggle waged fiercely.

Bob was very strong and active, but had been taken at a disadvantage.

The old man was very strong, however.

Indeed, he seemed possessed of superhuman strength.

It was Bob's idea that the old man would speedily become exhausted, but such did not prove to be the case.

In fact, Bob was the first to become tired.

The madman seemed to realize this, and redoubled his exertions.

With a powerful effort, he threw Bob to the floor.

As he did so, he gave utterance to a wild cry of triumph.

He threw himself down upon Bob, and seized the youth by the throat.

There was little doubt but that he would have choked Bob to death, had there not come an interruption.

The youths had heard the old man give utterance to the wild cry as he leaped upon Bob, and had come to the conclusion that their comrade was in danger.

Mark Morrison swung himself down hastily and made his way down the rope with all possible speed.

He reached the ledge just as the old man succeeded in throwing Bob to the floor, and just as the old man seized Bob by the throat Mark leaped through the opening.

He hurled himself upon the old man, upsetting him and freeing Bob.

Bob leaped to his feet instantly and went to his friend's assistance.

The old man struggled fiercely, but could not withstand the combined assault from the two young fellows, and was thrown to the ground with considerable force.

The fact was that the youths did not wish to handle the old man severely, but were forced to do so, he fighting like a tiger.

As the old man went down his head struck an out-jutting rock and he was knocked senseless.



The youths rose and then looked at the old man and then each other, wonderingly.

"Jove! you came just in time, Mark!" exclaimed Bob, merrily.

"You're right," agreed Mark; "the old man seemed to have the better of you, didn't he?"

"He did that."

"How did it happen?"

"He took me unawares—jumped upon me the instant I stuck my head through the opening there, and I didn't have much chance."

"I see."

The youths now turned their attention to the old man.

"I hope he isn't dead," said Bob.

"Oh, I hardly think it is as bad as that," said Mark; "his head hit the rock pretty hard, but I don't think it more than knocked him senseless."

They made an examination and discovered that the old man's heart was still beating.

"He is all right," said Bob; "let's improve the opportunity and look all around the cavern and see if we can find any signs of Dick."

This did not take long.

The cavern was small, and had Dick been there they could speedily have found him.

As they finished their search, the old man came to, and sitting in a sitting posture, glared at the youths.

"Hello! You've come to, have you?" remarked Bob. "Who are you, anyway?"

The old man responded with a series of inarticulate utterings.

"He's dumb, Bob," said Mark, "and can't talk."

"You're right, Mark; and as we will be unable to get any information out of him, we might as well get out of here."

"So we had."

The youths left the cavern and climbing up the rope, were soon among their friends once more.

## CHAPTER IX.

### BOB AT WORK.

When Bob and Mark told the story of their encounter with the old man in the cavern, the youths were greatly excited.

They uttered exclamations of amazement.

"Say, that is a rather strange affair," said Sam Sanderson.

"And you saw nothing to indicate that Dick had been there?" from another.

"No, nothing at all," replied Bob.

"Maybe the old man threw Dick down into the ravine," suggested another of the youths.

"I hardly think that," replied Bob; "and after we have eaten our dinner we will go down into the ravine and make a thorough search."

"You say that old man down in the cavern was hurt in his struggle with you?" said Sam Sanderson.

"Yes," replied Bob; "but he wasn't seriously hurt."

"You think he could climb out, then?"

"Oh, yes; he's all right."

"Well, I'm glad of that; it would be too bad if he were unable to get out and should starve to death in there."

"So it would," acquiesced Bob; "but there is no danger of that."

Several of the youths were looking over the edge of the precipice, and just then one of them exclaimed:

"There he is; I see him! He's all right!"

"Yes, he's out on the ledge looking upward," said another of the youths; "he's not hurt to speak of."

"You may be sure he isn't," said Bob; "and now, come on, fellows, let's eat our lunch and get down and search the ravine and see if we can find anything of Dick—not that I do expect to find him, but we haven't anything else to do; if I really thought there was any likelihood of finding Dick's body down there, we wouldn't wait to eat lunch."

It did not take the youths long to get through with their scanty meal.

All they had was some hard bread and cold meat, and it was quickly despatched.

Then Bob detailed five of the youths to go down into the ravine.

They set out at once, and, half a mile away, found a place where they were enabled to descend.

They made their way back down the ravine to a point directly underneath where their comrades stood, which marked the spot where Dick's uniform had been found.

They searched everywhere, but were unable to find anything to indicate that Dick had been thrown down there.

When satisfied that their comrade's body was nowhere to be found, the youths made their way back up on top of the bluff and rejoined their comrades.

The youths now settled down to spend the afternoon.

Bob walked out to the road where the two "Liberty Boys" were on guard.



"No signs of Dick yet, eh, boys?" he remarked.

"No," replied one, "he hasn't shown up yet."

"We haven't seen a soul since we've been waiting here," said the other.

"Well, I wish he would come," said Bob; "I'm worried about him."

"You are?" remarked one of the youths. "Why so?"

Bob told the two about finding Dick's hat, coat and gun on the edge of the precipice.

They were greatly surprised.

"That looks bad," said one; "maybe the old man threw him over the precipice."

"No," said Bob; "we have looked down in the ravine, underneath the spot where the things were found."

"And you found no signs of his having been thrown down?"

"None whatever—so the boys say who went down."

"Well, well; it is a very strange affair."

"So it is; and I shall be greatly worried until Dick shows up, or I know what has become of him."

"That's right; it is enough to worry us."

"If Dick doesn't show up before nightfall," went on Bob, "I shall go in search of him."

"Where will you go, Bob?"

"I'll go down and investigate the British. He may have been taken prisoner."

"That will be dangerous, Bob!"

"Oh, not so very; but no matter, we must find out what has become of Dick."

"That is true, of course."

The "Liberty Boys" remained where they were, and waited all the afternoon, but Dick did not come.

As soon as it was dark Bob announced his intention of going in search of Dick.

"I am afraid the redcoats have captured Dick," he said, soberly; "I am sure that, otherwise, he would have been here ere this."

"It would seem so, Bob," agreed Mark Morrison.

"Better let some of us go along with you, old man," suggested Sam Sanderson.

But Bob shook his head.

"No," he said; "I am going on a reconnoitring expedition, and may wish to enter the British encampment, and one can do better than two or more. He will be less liable to be detected, you know."

Then, telling the youths to remain where they were till he came back, Bob took his departure.

He went on foot.

He felt that this would be safer than to go on horseback.

He did not think it could be more than four or five

miles to the British encampment, and he could walk there in an hour or so.

He set out down the road.

He walked at a brisk pace.

He could walk as fast as he pleased for an hour, and would then have to be careful and proceed cautiously.

Bob followed out this plan.

He kept on at a good gait for an hour, at least.

Then he slackened his speed.

He believed he was close to the British encampment.

He could smell smoke.

He judged this came from the camp-fires of the enemy.

Therefore the camp must be near at hand.

Bob might be challenged at any moment.

To avoid this, Bob left the main road and struck into the timber.

He reasoned that the sentinels would be stationed at the point where the road struck the encampment.

By going into the timber and approaching in that way he might avoid the sentinels altogether.

Bob stole forward, through the timber.

He was almost as good at this kind of work as was Dick himself.

They had worked and trained together so much that both were proficient in woodcraft.

Bob had proceeded in this manner a distance of three quarters of a mile or so, when he came in sight of camp-fires.

He could see the fires, through the trees.

"Now I will have to be careful," thought the youth; "I am close upon the camp."

Bob stole carefully forward.

He wished to avoid the sentinels.

Every few yards he would pause and take a survey of the situation.

This made his progress slow.

But it was sure and as safe as it could possibly be under the circumstances.

And this was what Bob wished.

He did not wish to do anything rash, and allow himself to be detected and captured.

Bob saw that the British encampment was in a clear space in the midst of the woods.

"A splendid place for a camp," the youth thought.

Forward he stole.

Presently he caught sight of a log building.

The building was just within the edge of the open space.

The back of the building was to the timber.

"I wonder what that building is for?" thought Bob. "the officers' quarters, probably."



decided to investigate.

changed his course so that he would approach the of the building.

approached very cautiously, for he feared that there be sentinels in the vicinity of the cabin.

soon saw that he was right about this.

he drew near the building he saw the form of a mel outlined against the light of a camp-fire.

ere was more than one sentinel, too, Bob discovered, resently, just as he had ensconced himself behind e not twenty feet from where the sentinel stood, the at said:

ay, Sam, go over to our tent and bring my canteen, ou?"

was evidently speaking to a fellow sentinel, for a came from around in front of the building.

ove! what if one of the officers should come while gone, Bill?"

h, there isn't any danger. And I'm awfully thirsty; t you?"

My mouth is dry as an ash-heap!"

f course it is! Go along, and get the canteen."

ll right."

en there was the sound of footsteps.

b was thrilled with excitement.

had decided that this log building was the guard-or prison.

ere would not likely be two sentinels on guard over there was no one confined in the building.

ght not that person be Dick?

b almost hoped so.

f I was sure he was in there I'd get him out!" he to himself.

ll go ahead, just as if I was sure he was in there," ought; "I'll find out, and that very quickly!"

b was a youth who was quick to act, once his mind made up.

left his position behind the tree and stole forward d the sentinel.

at worthy was leaning on his musket, gazing in the tion taken by his brother sentinel.

ubtless he was already, in imagination, tasting the r which his comrade was to bring.

was lucky for Bob's plans that the redcoat's atten- was all turned in some other direction.

gave the youth an opportunity to slip up close be- the fellow without being in much danger of being vered.

b, however, was very skillful at this sort of work.

made no more noise than a ghost would have done.

He was skillful as any redman of the forest.

As he drew near the sentinel, Bob drew his pistol.

Of course, he did not contemplate shooting the man.

The noise of the shot would have aroused the camp, instantly, and brought the redcoats buzzing all around him.

He had a much better plan.

He reversed the weapon, grasping it by the muzzle.

The handle of the pistol was very solid and heavy.

A better weapon with which to strike a man down could hardly have been found.

Bob knew this from experience.

He had knocked many a man down with the butt of the weapon.

Bob crept up until he was within striking distance.

Then he measured the distance carefully, and, drawing back, struck the unsuspecting redcoat over the head with the butt of the pistol.

It was a terrible blow.

The sentinel gave utterance to a gasping groan and dropped as if he had been hit with a sledgehammer.

Stooping, Bob seized hold of the sentinel and dragged him back into the shadows of the timber.

Bob now quickly doffed his coat, removed the coat from the sentinel and donned it.

He donned the redcoat's hat, also, and took up his musket.

Then Bob strode forward and took up his position where the sentinel had stood when stricken down.

Bob held the pistol in his right hand, which was held down by his side and back, so that the pistol could not be seen.

His left hand was on the muzzle of the musket, on which Bob leaned in the same fashion as the redcoat had done.

In appearance Bob was a good counterpart of the sentinel, and he hoped to be able to deceive the other sentinel, who would be back soon.

Bob knew he would not have time to make an investigation of the cabin before the sentinel would be back; therefore the only thing to do was to wait till he returned and serve him the same way he had served the other.

Bob did not have long to wait.

The sentinel was soon seen approaching.

He was walking rapidly, evidently eager to get back to his post.

In his hand he held a canteen, and as he approached where Bob stood, he said:

"Well, I got it, old man! Has everything been quiet since I went away?"

He was now within a yard of Bob, and as he extended the canteen toward his supposed comrade, Bob suddenly



struck the redcoat a terrific blow over the head with the butt of the pistol.

The fellow went down as if he had been shot.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE RESCUE.

Stooping quickly, Bob seized hold of the redcoat's coat-collar and dragged the insensible man back into the protecting shadows of the timber, and to a point beside the form of his fellow sentinel.

Bob felt in the pocket of the redcoats' coats, and found a key which he was sure would unlock the door of the cabin.

He stood still and thought for a few moments.

Should he tie the redcoats and gag them?

He did not know how long he might be detained in the cabin, nor how long it would be before the men would regain consciousness.

He decided that the safest plan would be to tie the redcoats and gag them, and he proceeded to do this.

This took valuable time, but the youth thought it would be worth all the time and trouble it cost.

When he had finished the work, Bob made his way around to the front of the cabin.

He still wore the redcoat's coat and hat and carried one of the muskets.

If anyone should come along he would be able to pass himself off for the regular sentinel, he thought.

He made his way to the door and tried the key.

It fitted the lock.

He soon succeeded in unlocking the door, and opening it.

He pushed the door open.

Then he stepped through the doorway into the building.

He was careful not to make any more noise than was necessary.

He did not know who might be in the room.

Suddenly he was startled by hearing a voice ask:

"Who is there?"

He was both startled, and then thrilled with joy.

He recognized the voice.

It was Dick's.

"Is that you, Dick?" he cried, in a cautious, but eager and excited, voice.

"Yes, it is I, Bob. Thank goodness, you have come!"

"Are you in here all by yourself?" asked Bob.

"Yes; but my hands are tied; come and cut the rope."

"All right; I'm coming."

Bob hastened across the room, as quickly as he could, in the darkness.

He was soon at Dick's side.

He cut the rope binding Dick's hands.

Dick drew a breath of relief.

"Jove! It seems good to have my hands free again," he murmured. "How came you to find me, Bob?"

"We have no time to talk, Dick," replied Bob. "We had better get out of this as quickly as possible."

"I guess you're right about that. Well, I am ready, and entirely willing to get out of here. Where are the sentinels?"

"I have put them to sleep, Dick."

"Ah! Did you kill them, Bob?"

"No; I didn't have to do that, Dick. I just gave them a gentle tap on the head with the butt of my pistol, that is all. That always suffices to put a man asleep, you know."

"So it does. Well, let's be going."

They started to cross the room, and as they did so, the sound of voices and footsteps outside came to their hearing.

"What does this mean?" they heard a voice say. "I thought sentinels were always kept on guard here."

"So did I," was the reply; "but there is no one on guard here."

"No, and—great Scott! the door is open!"

"Jove! I'm afraid we're in for it, Bob!" whispered Dick.

"It looks like it, old man."

"Let's see how many there are of them."

The youths moved quickly across the room, walking on tiptoes so as to make no noise.

They reached the door and looked out.

Their eyes fell upon two men who had almost reached the doorway.

"You take one, and I'll take the other, Bob," whispered Dick.

There was no time to say more.

The two men reached the door.

There they met with a surprise.

Out shot the fists of Dick and Bob.

The fists struck the newcomers fairly between the eyes and knocked them down.

Then the youths leaped out through the open doorway and darted around the corner of the house.

As they did so, they ran plump into a body of regulars.

There were perhaps a dozen in the party.



That they had been out on a foraging expedition was evident, for every man was loaded down with provisions of one kind and another.

The redcoats were taken entirely by surprise.

They gave utterance to exclamations of amazement.

They could not make out the appearance of the two who had run into them with any distinctness, but they seemed to realize that something was wrong, and dropping their loads, attempted to seize the two.

Then ensued a battle royal.

Dick and Bob were desperate.

They knew that under the circumstances, if they permitted themselves to be captured, it would be bad for them.

So they fought fiercely.

They struck out right and left.

They leaped this way and that.

They ducked and dodged.

Their wonderful quickness and agility stood them in good stead.

It enabled them to keep from being struck damaging blows by the redcoats.

The two men who had been knocked down just outside the doorway now appeared upon the scene and lent excitement to the affair by giving utterance to exclamations of various kinds.

"Seize them!"

"Knock them down!"

"Don't let them get away!"

"They are rebel spies! Give it to them!"

Such were a few of the exclamations.

The redcoats did their best to obey orders.

They tried to seize the youths, tried to knock them down, did their best to prevent them from getting away. But they could not do it.

After having knocked five or six redcoats down, the youths got free from the rest, and dashed into the timber.

"After them!" howled one of the two who had been giving orders. "Don't let them escape."

The redcoats obeyed.

They dashed into the timber in pursuit of the fugitives. They drew their pistols and fired ahead of them.

They could not see the fugitives, but thought they might accidentally bring one or both down.

They were dealing with a couple of shrewd youths, however.

Dick and Bob were old hands at this kind of business.

They knew from past experience that the redcoats would

fire after them, and instead of running straight ahead, they had gone diagonally toward the left.

The result was that the bullets of the redcoats did not come anywhere near them.

The youths ran onward as rapidly as was possible, the darkness and the trees making it impossible for them to go at great speed.

Their pursuers labored under the same difficulties, however.

Knowing this, the youths were not worried.

Indeed, they felt reasonably safe now.

They were always at home in the woods, and under almost any circumstances.

They felt themselves to be more than matches in woodcraft for any of the redcoats.

They kept on running for fifteen or twenty minutes, and then slowed down to a walk.

"I guess we're all right now, Dick," said Bob.

"I think so," was the reply. "Let's stay, however, and listen and see if we can hear anything of our pursuers."

They stopped and listened.

They could not hear a sound.

"I guess we've thrown them wholly off our track, Dick."

"I think so, Bob. Well, we can go on our way at our leisure."

"So we can."

"Where are the rest of the boys, Bob?"

"They're in camp at a point about four or five miles from here."

"On the main road leading to Charleston?"

"Yes. Say, Dick, did you stop at a place where there is a deep ravine as you came south on your way to Charleston?"

"Is there a high bluff there, Bob, and an open space about a hundred yards from the road?"

"Yes, yes, that's the place. Did you stop there?"

"Yes; I changed my clothes there—took off my uniform and put on this old suit of homespun, you know."

"Ah!" exclaimed Bob. "Then that explains it."

"Explains what?"

"Why, our finding your uniform and musket lying on the brink of the precipice."

"On the brink of the precipice?"

"Yes."

"You say my uniform was lying there?"

"It was."

"That is strange; I didn't put it there."

"You didn't?"

"No."

"Where did you put it?"



"In a hollow tree. I put my uniform and my gun there; it was a splendid place, I thought, for they would be kept dry in case of rain.

"Well, well, I thought that you would hardly leave your uniform and gun lying in such a place," said Bob.

"No, indeed; but how in the world did they come there?"

"I think I know," said Bob. "The old crazy man of the cavern must have seen you place them there, and took them out and placed them on the brink of the precipice where we found them."

"The old man of the cavern? Who do you mean, Bob?"

"Oh, that's so; you don't know about him, do you?" remarked Bob.

Then he went ahead and told Dick about the old man whom they had found in the cavern in the face of the bluff.

"Well, well, that is rather a strange affair," remarked Dick; "and so when you saw my uniform lying there you were puzzled to know what became of me, eh?"

"We were that, and we were worried, too, old man."

"I don't doubt it, Bob."

"We thought it possible that the old man might have thrown you over the precipice."

"Under the circumstances, such a thought would be apt to occur to you."

"Yes, and some of the boys went down and searched in the bottom of the ravine, but, of course, found nothing."

"Then you made up your mind that something else had happened to me, eh?"

"Yes; when night came and you hadn't shown up, I made up my mind that the probabilities were that you had been captured by the redcoats."

"And you decided to come and search for me, eh?"

"Yes, Dick."

"Well, I'm mighty glad that you did. They had me tight and fast."

"How did it happen, anyway, Dick?"

Dick explained.

He told the story of his adventures in the British encampment, and also in Charleston.

"Jove! You had a lively time of it, didn't you?" remarked Bob.

"Pretty lively."

"Say, that British spy was a bold fellow, wasn't he, to try to put you out of the way and get hold of your papers?"

"Yes, that was rather a bold piece of business, Bob."

"But he made a mistake when he got hold of you."

Dick made no reply, and the youths walked onward at a goodly pace.

Presently they came to the road, and feeling safe from pursuit now, they struck into the road and made their way northward at a rapid pace.

"Say, Dick, what do you think about the situation, anyway?" asked Bob presently.

"You mean as between the patriot army in Charleston and the British army, Bob?"

"Yes, that is what I mean."

"Well, I can define the situation in one word, Bob."

"And that?"

"Bad!"

"I was afraid it wasn't very good. Is Lincoln going to evacuate Charleston?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"He can't do it, Bob."

"He can't?"

"No; he has delayed too long. The city is entirely surrounded by the British army and the patriot soldiers would be slaughtered if they tried to get away."

"Well, well, that is too bad!"

"Indeed, it is."

"Don't you think that Lincoln can hold out against the British and keep them from capturing the city, Dick?"

"He will be able to hold out a while, Bob."

"But you think he will ultimately have to surrender."

"Such a result is inevitable; I was in the British lines long enough to find out that their arrangements are perfect. The siege is on and Charleston will be attacked by both land and water."

"That is a bad outlook, Dick."

"Yes, there is no doubt about that."

"What will we do, Dick; there's not much that we can do, is there?"

"Not much, I guess, Bob; our force is too small to do much damage, but we will hang around in the vicinity



watch our chances, and if the opportunity comes for strike the British a blow, we will improve it."

"You're right, we will, Dick."

The youths had been walking rapidly and were now near a point where the "Liberty Boys" were in camp.

A minutes later the youths entered the camp.

When the "Liberty Boys" saw Dick alive and well, they were delighted.

They leaped to their feet and crowded around him.

They congratulated him on his safe return and all talked of peace.

"Here, there, fellows," laughed Dick; "that'll do. Stop eating all at once, and some of you, if you really love me, give me something to eat; I'm hungry as a bear."

Several of the youths hastened to obey, and a few minutes later Dick was busily engaged in eating cold bread and meat, and telling the youths the story of his adventure, the same as he had told it to Bob.

It turned out eventually as Dick had said it would.

On the twelfth of May, General Lincoln surrendered,

and the patriot army, consisting of three thousand men, became prisoners of war in the hands of the British.

The "Liberty Boys" had remained in the vicinity and had worried the redcoats considerably by striking at small parties here and there, but when General Lincoln surrendered, they took their departure, as they could be of more service to the cause of Liberty elsewhere.

#### THE END.

The next number (46) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS' IRON GRIP; OR, SQUEEZING THE REDCOATS," by Harry Moore.

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OR, DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR.

By J.A.S. G. MERRITT.



One of the guns was loaded, and the angry pirates dragged the boy over to the piece and bound him over the muzzle. Santa Cruz seized the lark string in his hand. "Thus perish all my enemies!" he yelled.



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